

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 11, 2013

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
H232, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner:

We write to urge you to address the looming expiration of unemployment benefits for millions of Americans before leaving for the year. Without swift Congressional action, 1.3 million jobless workers will have their benefits cut off on December 28th, and nearly another 1.9 million will lose their unemployment benefits over the first half of next year. This would not only be a devastating blow for millions of Americans who are already struggling, but it would also hurt our economy.

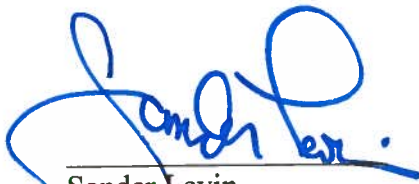
The Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program is scheduled to immediately and completely stop at the end of 2013, during the holiday season, with the last payable week ending on December 28th. All current EUC beneficiaries will lose their benefits, and individuals exhausting their limited state unemployment benefits will no longer be eligible for EUC benefits in 2014. This cutoff will affect over 3 million Americans over the next six months, and thereby also negatively impact our economic growth. In fact, recent estimates indicate that the expiration of the EUC program would cost our economy 310,000 jobs and drain roughly four-tenths of a percentage point from first-quarter economic growth.

While unemployment benefits remain a critical lifeline for dislocated workers and their families, these benefits have recently been significantly scaled back. According to the Congressional Research Service, the total amount of weeks of unemployment benefits has dropped by more than a third across the states, and by more than 50 percent in some states, compared to two years ago. Furthermore, the recipients have seen their weekly benefit payment provided by the EUC program cut under sequestration.

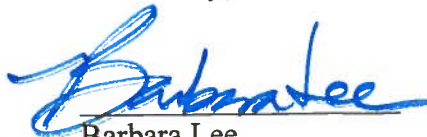
Even with the progress our economy has seen since the depths of the recession, there are still 1.3 million fewer jobs today than when the recession started six years ago. Additionally, approximately 4 million Americans are considered long-term unemployed, and have been looking for work for more than six months. Now is certainly not the time to further decimate vital federal assistance to workers who have lost their job through no fault of their own and who must actively seek work in order to be eligible for unemployment benefits. We therefore strongly urge you to immediately bring up a one-year extension of the current EUC program.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.


Sincerely,



Sander Levin
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress